

REMARKS

Claims 1-24 were pending in the application. Claims 1-24 stand rejected. Claims 1-24 are hereby canceled. New claims 25-40 are added. Applicant respectfully requests allowance of the claims.

Claim Rejections Based Upon 35 U.S.C. § 102(b)

Claims 1-24 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,483,582 (Pugh et al.). Claims 1-24 have been canceled and new claims 25-38 added. Pugh does not anticipate new claims 25-38 for the following reasons.

New independent claim 25 recites receiving a prepaid account code from a network device into an access server to gain access to the internet through a first access provider and wherein the prepaid account code is associated with a second access provider. Pugh discloses providing prepaid access to a telephone system, not *internet* access as required by claim 1. Additionally, claim 1 recites providing internet access through the *first access provider* even though the prepaid account code is associated with the *second access provider*. In contrast, Pugh discloses the prepaid access wherein a user utilizes a prepaid account number (Pugh, col. 7, lines 50-55) to connect to the user's preferred carrier (Pugh, FIG. 7- step 734, FIG. 10- steps 1026 and 1011) even though the user is initially connected to the PSTN by a local carrier (Pugh, FIG.1). Claim 1 advantageously allows the first access provider to provide the internet access rather than having to further connect the user to the second access provider as disclosed by Pugh.

An example of claim 1 includes a user purchasing a prepaid internet access card to access the internet. A second internet access provider such as the Microsoft Network (MSN) sells the prepaid internet access card at a general retailer. The user encounters a situation where the network device utilized to access the internet does not contain MSN software, but only contains

dial-up software for a first internet access provider such as America Online (AOL). The network device could be a personal computer, a laptop computer, or other similar equipment.

Upon dialing the AOL service, the network device displays a logon prompt to the user. Typically, the logon prompt asks for a username and a password. In this example, the prepaid internet access card purchased from MSN contains a prepaid account code including a username and a password that AOL recognizes as valid. After transferring the username and password from the network device to AOL, the user would be granted internet access through AOL based upon the username and password purchased from MSN.

New independent claim 32 contains similar limitations as claim 25 and is therefore allowable over the art of record. Dependent claims 26-31 and 33-38 contain limitations that render them separately allowable over the prior art. However, a discussion is unnecessary because the dependent claims depend from allowable independent claims.

CONCLUSION

The claims in their present form are allowable over the art of record. Applicant therefore solicits their allowance. Any fees in addition to those submitted may be charged to deposit account 21-0765.

Respectfully submitted,

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